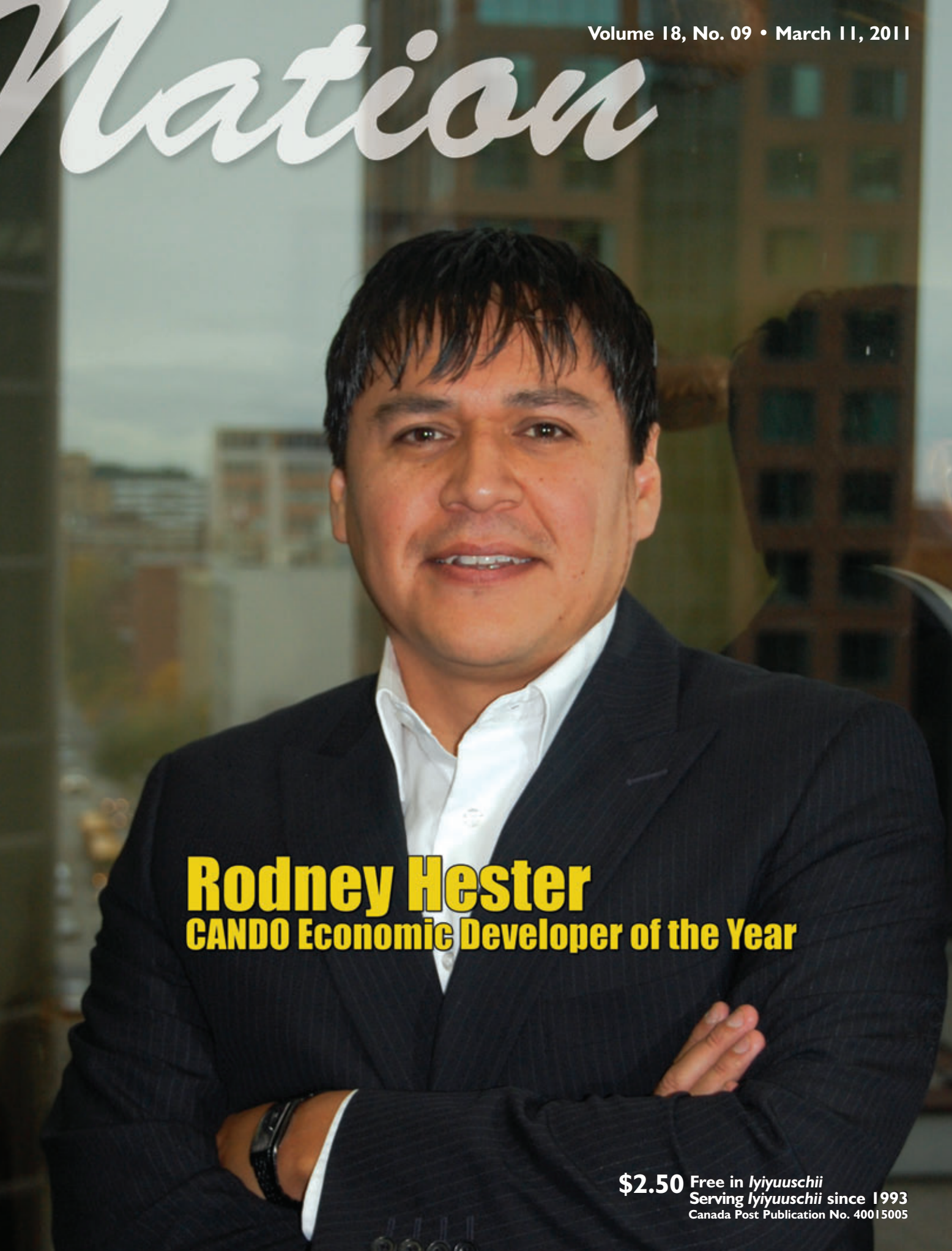
Nation
Volume 18, No. 09 • March 11, 2011



Rodney Hester
CANDO Economic Developer of the Year

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COOKING TOGETHER IS A RECIPE FOR FUN

MARCH IS NUTRITION MONTH

A good time to start cooking with family and friends.

Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

facebook.com/creehealth
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Cree got your tongue

By Will Nicholls

In 1993, the Assembly of First Nations declared the month of March as Aboriginal Languages Month. Since then, March is a time when First Nations celebrate their languages and their survival. There are 192 different Aboriginal languages that are recognized in North America. Canada is home to 70 of them.

Statistics paint a pretty grim future for their survival. Linguists say about 80% of Canada's Aboriginal languages are becoming extinct. Many languages spoken by First Nations peoples have only 10 or so speakers, sometimes fewer (e.g., Chinook, Comox or Kutenai).

This is a shame because Native American languages are among the oldest languages in the world. Many of them are thousands of years old making them far more mature than such Johnny Come Latelies as English and French.

The good news for Cree is we are fortunate to possess one of the strongest languages. It's expected that only Cree, Ojibway and Inukitut have a large enough population of fluent speakers to be considered viable to survive in the long term.

Others though warn us not to be too complacent. The Cree Cultural Institute said, "In Iiyiyuuschii, the Cree language is very much alive: It is spoken by almost all 15,000 of us. It is taught in our homes and schools, beginning in kindergarten. And, it is everywhere you look, on signs and banners, in books and films.

"Despite its relative health, however, our language is still threatened. For Cree society has been subjected to the same forces that have resulted in language loss in other communities: Residential schooling and the ensuing break between generations, economic change in the communities, and the lack of Cree terms for some of the newer aspects of Cree life all conspire to undermine our language."

The Cree Nation, though abounds with examples of Crees working to preserve and promote the Cree language. I remember attending a Cree Youth Council AGA a number of years back. They had a money jar and every time you lapsed into non-Cree words you had to put money in the jar. It cost you to say something in English or French!

I was quite proud of my mother and Uncle Luke among many who went and learnt syllabics and proper ways to translate. They were both grandparents at that point.

The Nation itself promotes the use of Cree. We have spent our own money to develop Cree type fonts. This was not cheap and we did it without any assistance, financial or otherwise. It was not an easy task for our Iyiyuu Ayimuun editor Brian Webb.

He was also the one who translated the legends you see in the Nation. Even the older issues of the Nation are still used in schools in the Cree communities as they are in both English language and Cree syllabics.

Then there are our holidays like goose break and moose break. Isaac Masty at the Cree Language and Culture Conference held by the Cree School Board in Oujé-Bougoumou November 1997, said, "The Cree language is out there on the land. This is why we don't keep students and young people from going out on the land for a certain period of time during the school year. Out there they get a lot of knowledge concerning the Cree language."

All in all, wouldn't you say it's time to celebrate the survival and the future of the Cree language?

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Dirty Dishes

By Sonny Orr

One of the things in life that many people don't understand, or want to cope with, is cleaning up. I remember in my earlier acne years discovering socks from bygone years all cuddled up with one of those numerous monster dust balls under my bed, begging to be thrown out with all the leftover refuse caused by laziness. Even after all these years of growing into a multi-decade human, cleaning up just doesn't grab me as an appealing time waster.

Then, scientists invented the molecular microscope and a whole new world was revealed living on a speck of dust floating through the air. Yes, the mite – an extraordinarily minuscule creature, which looks like a tiny crab – is something we never knew existed in our daily lives, even on our bodies. It is, in a way, something straight out of a Dr. Seuss children's book. In fact, one speck of dust has about 100,000 of these little critters all happily living away and munching on anything small enough to fit in their tiny mouths.

After watching and reading up on these mites, I discovered that the entire world is covered with them. They act like tiny goats let loose in a flowerbed, they'll eat anything and everything, but their favourite food is dead skin and they constantly poop a by-product, yes, their feces. In your average pillow, about 10 billion mites are quietly filling your pillow with mite crap, which makes your pillow lumpy. Now that you know, you'll never sleep without changing your pillow at least once a year. I'm sorry, I had to tell the masses.

In fact, mite poop cause allergies. Often mistaken for allergies to dust and other items, in reality, it's poop, poop and more poop. Thankfully, the mites are actually helpful. Can you imagine all the dead skin lying around in layers in your house? Most humans shed their skin at least twice a year in total (just guessing) so you can imagine our little mites do contribute in a way.

Which brings to mind, that dust mites are just one of the thousands of types of mites. One kind of mite lives in your eyelashes and looks like a corkscrew. I'm not sure what they live on but I'm sure mascara is not on their menu. In today's world of overexposure to so many variations of the flu and other types of diseases, caused by overnight international flights and transmitted by unknowing human hosts, keeping clean is no longer something that is associated with looking good, it can be a matter of life and death. So I do dishes on a regular basis just to keep my hands clean enough to fight off any disease. But hey, those mites just keep coming back to haunt me under the bed and in the closet.

To battle those deadly dust mites, I bought a robot, which thankfully and faithfully vacuums every little square inch of my floor (available at hardware stores). On my next trip south, I will get the robot janitor, which will wash and polish my floor while I'm out at work. I don't think I'll get a dishwashing machine though. But hey, you never know, they might actually make one that works.

the Nation is published every two weeks by Beesum Communications

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SUBSCRIPTIONS
INDIVIDUALS & INSTITUTIONS:
$60 PLUS TAXES
US: $90
ABROAD: $110
PAYABLE TO BEESUM COMMUNICATIONS
PRINTED BY IMPRIMERIE LEBONFON
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
PUBLICATION MAIL #40015005
ISSN #1206-2642
The Nation IS A MEMBER OF:
THE JAMES BAY CREE COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETY,
CIRCLE OF ABORIGINAL CONTROLLED PUBLISHERS,
MAGAZINES CANADA
QUEBEC COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER ASSN.
CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS ASSN.
LES HEBDOS SÉLECT DU QUÉBEC
We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

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Award afterglow still bright

Rodney Hester reflects on his CANDO Economic Developer of the Year Award and recent successes

By Amy German

CREECO has a lot to be proud of these days, particularly one of its many shining stars. Business Development Coordinator Rodney Hester has not only been recognized nationally for his efforts, he has made major strides in industry for the Crees.

Last September, Hester was recognized by the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO) as Economic Developer of the Year. In being awarded this prestigious honour, Hester beat out candidates from First Nations across Canada and other major players at the three-day conference that ran September 27-30 in Niagara Falls.

While the candidates from every province and territory had been whittled down to a shortlist prior to the conference, it was swift speaking at the event that made Hester stand out.

"Mike Fontaine from Manitoba was a candidate along with me and we both delivered our speeches on different occasions at that event. At the end of the day it was the participants at the conference and the selection committee that decided who was going to win that award based on the information and success stories we were able to present," said Hester.

To earn the top position, Hester gave a speech at the event on the role he has played in economic development for the Cree Regional Economic Enterprises Company (CREECO) and what this has done for the Cree of Eeyou Istchee.

While Hester hasn't been with CREECO since its inception in 1982, he did highlight what his role has been since joining the team. Admittedly, Hester said he was most proud of CREECO's last two major deals: forming a partnership with Guy Baril to form Eeyou Baril, a construction supply company, and the realizing of CREECO's dream of opening a new Quality Inn in Val-d'Or. His speech showcased these two major accomplishments.

"I played a leading role in Eeyou Baril because as the Business Development Coordinator of CREECO, my job is to pursue development and opportunities. In this case, it was a partnership and so I worked with Guy Baril for about a year on it while we were developing it," said Hester.

This particular partnership not only has given construction industry of the north a new and very competitive player to do business with when it comes to selecting who will provide materials for a new project but also the opportunity to play the same role in other provinces.

"We are not only going to remain in Eeyou Istschee but we are going to go with whatever development opportunity opens up for us. We can go to Ontario, Manitoba and beyond. Eeyou Baril has become part of the CREECO family of companies," Hester added.

At the moment however, the biggest buzz is all about the opening of the new Quality Inn and Suites in Val-d'Or that CREECO has built in partnership with Val-d'Or Mayor Fernand Trahan, who also owns the L'Escale Hotel across the street.

While the new hotel is slated to have its grand opening on March 17, progress has been so quick on the project that the hotel is actually open for business two full weeks ahead of schedule.

"It is kind of surreal because you walk into this hotel right now, this is where I am, and it is real. It's something that a lot work and effort was put into and now we're seeing the fruits of our labour. This is a project that will instill pride in the Crees of Eeyou Istchee and it is a project that's going to reap long-term benefits for our people and our economy," said Hester, calling from the hotel's conference room.

Business Development Coordinator Rodney Hester

All the members of the Cree Board of Compensation were at the hotel as Hester spoke to *the Nation*, giving the conference room its first real whirl. Hester said everyone was beaming with pride as the Crees have now become a major player in the hospitality industry.

Still, looking back on the last few years of CREECO's progress, Hester recognizes that the entity may not have achieved many of its successes without the influence and vision of its former president, the late Albert W. Diamond.

Diamond, who was a mentor to everyone whoever worked for CREECO, is being remembered at the hotel in a special way as the new hotel's executive conference room now bears his name. Under that moniker, the conference room alone serves as a symbol of Cree accomplishment and success.

As for what's next for CREECO, the sky is the limit. Hester said he and the rest of entity are keeping their eyes and ears open as they plan to keep moving forward for the advancement of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee.

> "THIS IS A PROJECT THAT WILL INSTILL PRIDE IN THE CREES OF EEYOU ISTCHEE AND IT IS A PROJECT THAT'S GOING TO REAP LONG-TERM BENEFITS FOR OUR PEOPLE AND OUR ECONOMY."

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CREE TRAPPERS ASSOCIATION

The Executive, Board of Directors and staff of the Cree Trappers Association extend their sympathies and deepest condolences to the family and friends of the late Alfred Jolly, and to the Cree Nation of Waswanipi on the death of our former President.

Fund midwifery fully

The province's midwives cry out for full funding to increase their regional presence

By Amy German

Quebec's midwives are reaching out to the general public to get midwifery fully funded through a petition directed at the National Assembly.

The petition, available on the National Assembly's website, is a call to the Ministry of Health to raise provincial funding to 100% as the price tag is currently being divided equally between the province and the region.

According to Christine Roy, a midwife who previously headed up the midwifery program within the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB), though midwifery is covered by Medicare, regional infighting over dollars is keeping the service out of reach for Quebecers province-wide. The same rings true unfortunately for the Crees of James Bay.

"Let's say a region receives X amount of funding for all of the health services that they offer in the region, it's then up to the region to decide what they will do with that funding and this is where fighting will start within the region about which program is more important than another," said Roy.

As it is always the squeakiest wheel that gets the grease, Roy said funding for midwifery and birthing centres often gets pushed aside.

While the CBHSSJB has been mulling over the idea of starting up a birthing clinic in Mistissini as a means of bringing birth back to the communities and also looking to develop a English-language midwifery program through the existing French-language program at l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, provincial problems may stand in the way of progress.

For example, within James Bay, a large number of births occur at the Chibougamau Hospital where a doctor-run obstetrics system is in place in lieu of a midwife-run birthing clinic in the territory. Funding would have to be diverted back to the communities if they desire Cree-run midwifery clinics, which is a huge administrative ordeal.

Non-Cree midwives would also have to be hired first within the territory and that is another issue because without them, Crees would have to complete the 1600+ hours of apprenticing under another midwife outside of the communities.

At that, midwives are very hard to come by in Quebec as they don't get hired in the regions and so not many students feel encouraged to complete the four years of schooling the program requires and then all of the on-the-job training if they are not going to get a job. The current program offered in Quebec falls just a few credits short of a bachelor's degree.

"In Quebec, we started with 60 midwives in 1994 and today the number is around 125," said Roy.

Funding midwifery however could be the solution to a number of province-wide medical quandaries, according to Roy, especially when it comes to ensuring that pregnant women have optimal tcare as well as having a cost-effective healthcare system.

She gave the example of how a large number of obstetricians are retiring within the next five years and the province has yet to line up younger doctors to replace them. As these doctors retire, so does their knowledge honed from working many years in their field – something that family doctors simply don't have.

At the same time, the number of family doctors willing to offer obstetric care is also declining, limiting the options for those living outside urban centres, where most specialists can be found.

"This becomes a public-health issue because women then receive less optimal care. Regardless of the loss of the knowledge in the regions – and I'm not just talking about James Bay here, I'm talking about all of the small places that are not doing obstetrics anymore –

"FUNDING FOR MIDWIFERY AND BIRTHING CENTRES OFTEN GETS PUSHED ASIDE."

women will continue to get pregnant and emergency births will continue to happen," said Roy.

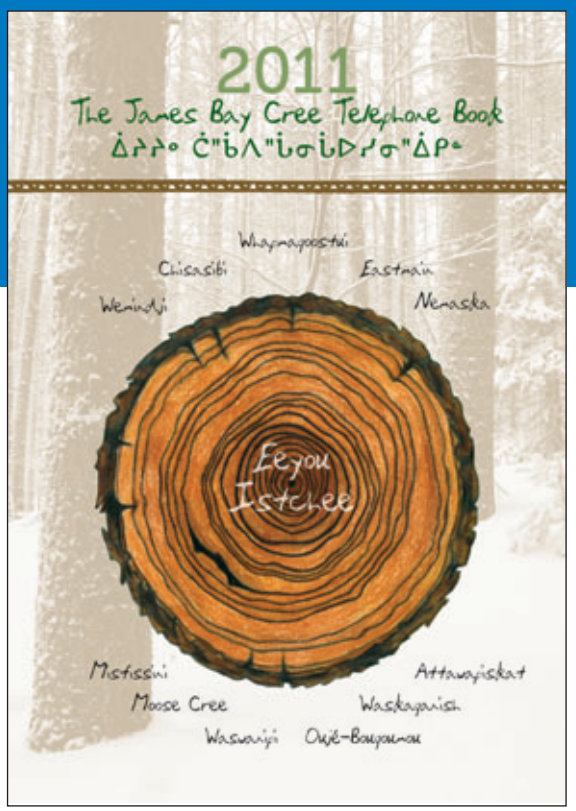
While she acknowledges that midwives could never accommodate the high rate of high-risk pregnancies common to Crees that result from gestational diabetes among other issues, Roy still argues that having midwives in the Cree communities would increase the quality of pre- and post-natal care for Crees.

Having midwives within the communities would mean that pregnant women and new mothers could get consistent care from the same individual for the duration of their pregnancy, instead of many doctors who are only available short-term under the current system. These midwives would work hand-in-hand with the doctors available to the communities, but the care would be more personalized.

"For births, only low-risk women would be able to stay behind, but it would mean that you would still have highly skilled personnel around when emergencies occur. So, you can have the best of both worlds as the community would be completely covered," said Roy.

Despite numerous attempts to get in touch with the Cree Health Board concerning this issue, no response was made on their behalf.

To sign the petition:
www.assnat.qc.ca/fr/exprimez-votre-opinion/petition/Petition-1389/index.html



James Bay Cree Telephone Book

Hear ye! Hear ye! The 2011 edition of the James Bay Cree Telephone has arrived in your community!

Head out to your band office to pick up your copy.
If you would like to order additional copies please send a cheque or money order, payable to Beesum Communications, at:
4529 Clark, Suite 403, Montreal, QC, H2T 2T3.
Otherwise, you can call our office to pay by Mastercard: 514-272-3077.
Cost: $25 per phone book plus 11$ shipping and handling, total: $36
Outside the Cree Territory please add taxes for a total of $41.01.
Special thanks go out to everyone in the communities and in the band offices who contributed to the production of this year's phone book. Without you this project would not have been possible. Meegwetch!

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Man charged with assault in Mistissini after standoff

According to Sûreté du Québec spokesperson Hélène Nepton, 29-year-old Benjamin Gunner was formally charged at the Amos courthouse on February 23 with two charges of assault and one charge of uttering threats to kill or poison an animal or bird.

The charges stem from an incident one day prior after Gunner barricaded himself within the home that he shares with his grandmother. Police were called to the scene at 269 Amisk Street in Mistissini at 3:00 am after Gunner apparently hit his grandmother in the face and then refused to leave the premises following the incident. During this time Gunner reportedly threatened to kill his grandmother's pet bird.

While police were aware that there were three firearms located in the home, the weapons were not considered to be part of the incident. Gunner eventually surrendered to police at 1:00 pm. His grandmother's injuries are being considered as minor.

CREECO to shave heads for cancer fundraiser

CREECO Chairman Jack R. Blacksmith and Communication Officer Jonathan Girard-Saganash will shave off their treasured manes to raise dollars for the Leucan Foundation for research into children's cancers.

Both Blacksmith and Girard-Saganash have agreed to shave their heads provided that the price is right. Girard-Saganash will do it if donations come in at $6500 and $10,000 is needed to shave Blacksmith's head.

For more info, contact Girard-Saganash at 514-602-7133 or jsaganash@boc-creeco.ca

Donations needed for fire victim

On February 28, Kathia Rock lost her home and all of her belongings due to a fire. In response to this, Wapikoni Mobile, the Native film-training project, is asking the public for donations to help Rock in her time of need.

On behalf of Rock, Wapikoni Mobile is requesting donations of pants (size 28-29), medium-sized jackets and size 7 shoes to help her in the short term. A call for donations of household goods will be made at a later date.

Donations can be made to: Wapikoni Mobile, 3155 Côte-de-Liesse, Montreal, H4N 2X1. And cash donations can be made by contacting Céline Brassard: c.brassard@onf.ca

Nature, Trade and Industry Show to be held in Rouyn-Noranda

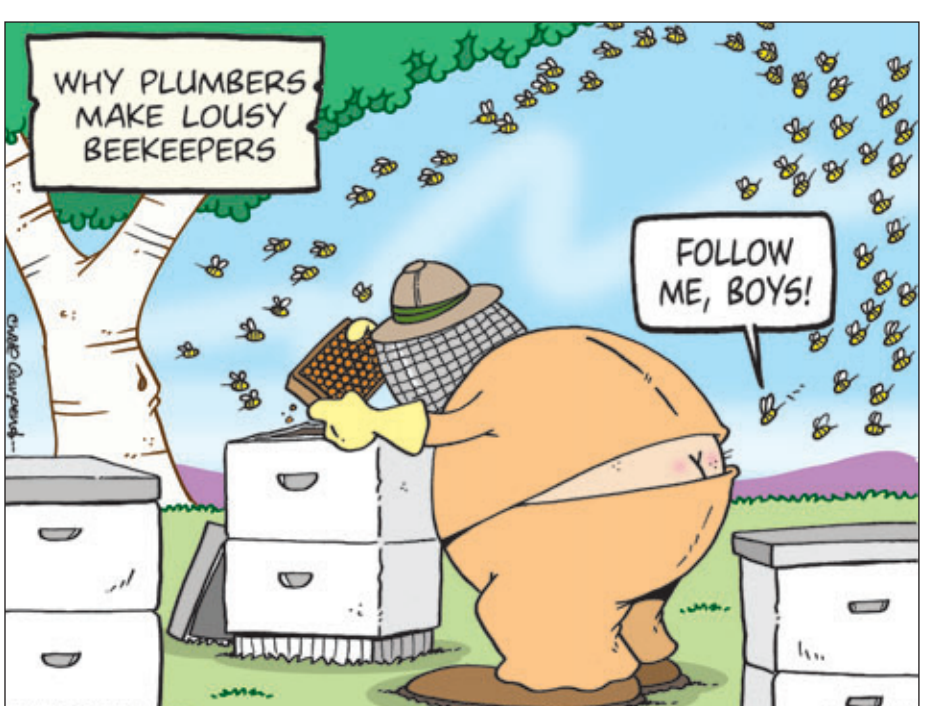
In collaboration with the First Nations Quebec Business Network, the Nature, Trade and Industry Show will be held in Rouyn-Noranda at Le Noranda Gouverneur Hotel March 23-24.

The show will serve as an opportunity for First Nations entrepreneurs and those in the economic development field to network and share mutual experiences while showcasing First Nations businesses to the public.

For more info:
www.firstnationstradeshow.com/en

Correction

In the September 10, 2010 issue (Volume 17, No. 22) of the Nation, the cover shot was credited to Joshua Bosum. The photo was actually taken by Ronald Blackned.



Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: www.tundracomics.com

PSSSSSSSST.....

Have any information you'd like to share with *the Nation*? Feel like there's something the rest of the Cree Nation should know?

Well that's what *the Nation* is here for. Call us at 514-272-3077, and we'll look into your story. If you don't call us, your voice won't be heard!

> THEY CHEERED, THEY JEERED AND GOBBLED DOWN TREATS AND KEPT THEIR FINGERS CROSSED.

Hockey rewards

The Caisse Populaire Desjardins celebrates success in school by treating a group of lucky kids to a hockey game at the Bell Centre

By Amy German

They cheered, they jeered and gobbled down treats and kept their fingers crossed for the home team on February 12 when the Caisse Populaire Desjardins sent children from Mistissini, Waswanipi and Oujé-Bougoumou to see the Montreal Canadiens play the Toronto Maple Leafs as a reward for their good school performance.

For the third year in a row, the Major Accounts department for First Nations

business services at Desjardins had the honour of providing tickets to children from three Cree communities as a way of promoting academic success.

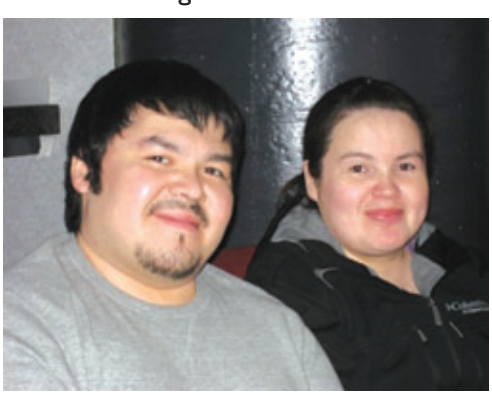
"The Desjardins Group, with the assistance of the Mistassini Lake Caisse (Paul-Yvon Pichette) and the Wawanipi Caisse (Claude Tremblay) and in collaboration with the Business Centre of the Eastern Abitibi (Gilles Gaudet) and the Fédération des caisses Desjardins (Yves Poirier), had the pleasure of welcoming these young people," said senior manager Yves Poirier.

According to Poirier, the youth night at the Bell Centre started three years ago after a conversation he had with then Mistissini Chief John Longchap out of a desire Desjardins had to further its community involvement and invest in the community's future through the youth.

While the Desjardins Group also helps out in these three communities by sponsoring annual summer golf tournaments and providing funds for special projects for Elders, this particular program was started in the hopes of seeing academic success rates improve.

"Instead of providing hockey tickets for the politicians or for people looking for them, we decided to invest in the youth of the community, particularly when it came to education. We know that this is a major problem within all First Nations communities whether they are Cree, Innu or Atikamek," said Poirier.

Each community had the opportunity to compile a list of its leading students and then draw names from a hat to select the lucky winners who got to fill those prestigious seats at the Bell Centre that Desjardins provided in the



Desjardins booth and in the Montreal Canadiens Children's Foundation booth. Desjardins provided for the tickets and meals for the participants while the individual communities provided for transportation to Montreal and accommodations while there.

The lucky winners were:

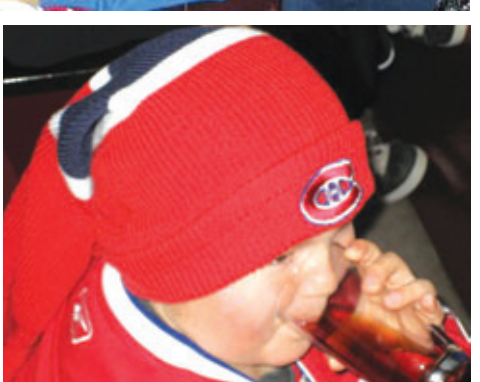
Waswanipi
Dagoodin Blacksmith and Serena Gull
Secondary: Curtis Gull and Meagan Icebound-Ottereyes
Chaperone: Roseanna Blacksmith.

Oujé-Bougoumou
Grade 6: Destiny Blacksmith
Sec. 1 E / F: Elston Salt
Sec. 2 / 3: Brandon Bosum
Sec. 4 / 5: Yolanda Bosum
Chaperone: Bella Mianscum

Mistissini
Elementary: Julie-Ann Jolly (Grade 5)
Keesha Neeposh-Baribeau (Grade 6)
Reshawn Matoush (Grade 5)
Vernon Matoush (Grade 6)
Secondary: Emerald Ottereyes (Sec 3)
Nemiah Shecapio (Sec 2)

The Desjardins Group wishes to thank the following individuals who helped make the night out with the kids a triumphant success:

Roseanna Blacksmith (Waswanipi), Bella Mianscum (Oujé-Bougoumou), Jerry Matoush and Olivia Metabie Matoush (Mistissini), the teachers and school principals in the three communities as well as Jimmy Iserhoff, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Lake Mistassini Caisse.



Who not to get financial advice from...

Are books on money saving really going to save you all that much?

By Amy German

After a few years of watching a recession put millions out of work, if not their homes, across the globe, many have turned to books on moneysaving to see how they can get the most bang out of their buck.

The problem with these kinds of books is that many of them are too general, provide advice that isn't really advice as a great deal of it is just common sense and the biggest clincher, the majority of them are American and provide advice that only applies in the States. Add to that the fact that Crees living on-reserve often don't have access to the many resources that are available in urban areas and reap the benefits of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and what do you get? Another book collecting dust on the bookshelf.

Take the new release *10,001 Ways to Live Large on a Small Budget* by the Writers of Wise Bread (yes, a blog) for example. While the book has 10,001 suggestions, how many of them are actually worth paying $19.95 to read? Of the 20 writers who contributed to this book, only one of them has an academic background in finance while the rest have enjoyed some success online or with their own personal finances (that there is no proof of). You have to ask yourself, are these really the people you would go to for advice about your money problems?

Wouldn't that be like getting stock tips off Martha Stewart's website or going to Charlie Sheen's twitter page for advice on... well, anything?

Broken into two parts the book's first half is on living frugally and the second on personal finance.

Taking a closer look at the first half, the book features chapters on: food & drink, travel, health & beauty, fun & entertainment, green living and education & self-improvement.

Diving right into it, the first chapter is all about "Simple Tips for Buying Great Affordable Wine". Moving on, they list a bunch of other suggestions for crap that tastes so-so that you can hide in other things in your house, such as salad dressing or sangria but that is pretty straightforward, isn't it?

Next up, they look at solutions to ease yourself from dining out expensively to eating in by brightening up your meals with fancy but cheap ingredients, such as Greek yoghurt, romaine, red leaf and other "fancy" lettuces or a ball of whole milk mozzarella. Sure, these things are available in Quebec but just how much would you have to spend on gas to get to them?

The book also features a myriad of lifestyle suggestions to save money, such as not washing your hair twice with shampoo like the bottle says (because everyone does that), going natural instead of buying hair dye and buying organic only products (because they abound up north too).

There are cheap dating alternatives too, like hitting happy hour instead of dinner and a movie, sharing a foot-long sub with your date and going camping (which is almost an alarming suggestion for a first date with a stranger).

The sections on bargain hunting, education and other tips in this publication are also of little relevance to anyone in the Cree communities. For one, as there are no thrift stores up north (to my knowledge), nor are there numerous grocery stores to chose from or buffets to take the family to fill up on the cheap.

The Agreement guarantees free education for Crees so that whole section is out the window and this book's personal finance section has mostly to do with American banking, taxation in the US and other common knowledge kernels of wisdom, such as why it is a bad idea to hide money in a tampon box.

The book does have some passable advice on saving money, such as living greener (reusing, reducing and recycling items), snuggling up to others for warmth to save on heating and tie-dying your old or stained t-shirts to make them wearable once more…(if you are into the hippie look).

"I MEAN, DID YOU REALLY NEED A BOOK TO TELL YOU TO USE LESS TOILET PAPER?"

But, more so than anything, one major lesson that can be taken or reapplied from this reading experience is that old Latin adage: caveat emptor or buyer beware.

There are a lot of individuals out there, particularly on the Internet, claiming to be financial experts or expert money-savers who have a lot to say, but each individual's situation is different and often their advice may not be relevant (like buying fresh because it is cheaper… elsewhere). A lot of it is about common sense and when that doesn't work, read the finer print to know what you are getting into.

If you are looking for financial advice, do your research and find someone in the know who has a background in that field, is trusted by those you know and has a good reputation.

When it comes to this book as a Band-Aid solution for being broke, be careful as over half of it doesn't apply to Canadians and even more so to Crees and the rest of it is pretty logical. I mean, did you really need a book to tell you to use less toilet paper?

Banking 101

Here are some things to think about before opening a bank account

By Christine Rigby

Banking can be intimidating for some and anything beyond the basics can become overwhelming. Fortunately, many financial institutions seem to understand this and have created services that are designed to make their clients feel more at ease.

Most people have savings or chequing accounts with their banks which allow the access to basic services, however many financial institutions offer far more services and products than this. Most banks can help you with investments, mortgages, credit, scholarships and financial advising, amongst other things.

Unfortunately not all residents in remote communities have access to banks the way they might if they were living in an urban centre. In some cases certain communities may not even have a financial institution at all. If your community does not have a bank, it may have stores or cooperatives which offer credit, or financial advisors who can help individuals understand where and how to gain access to basic banking needs.

While banks, such as the First Nations Bank, Caisse Populaire Desjardins and the Bank of Montreal, all have branches in some remote areas of Quebec, each offer slightly varying services. While the products and services offered are important to note when deciding which bank to open an account with, a bank's values and goals may be of interest as well. Some financial institutions, more than others, express an interest and intention to promote the self-sufficiency of First Nations communities and individuals, while others neglect the fact that different communities have different banking needs. Whether you live in a community that has a bank or not, it is important to shop around before opening your first account.

The First Nations Bank

The First Nations Bank of Canada is a financial institution that was conceived by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people. It opened its doors for the first time in Saskatoon in 1997. The FNB's main goal is to create and promote Aboriginal economic self-sufficiency, for both individuals and communities.

Opening an account at the FNB requires you to follow protocol that is standard for most banks. You will need two pieces of photo ID that also show your signature and date of birth. In most cases, you will also have to share information about your occupation and your current address.

The FNB has several types of accounts to choose from to meet their clients' specific needs. There are savings and chequing accounts, as well as U.S. dollar accounts, which are designed for individuals who travel frequently to the U.S. This last type of account is not offered by all financial institutions and may be a factor when deciding where you would like to open an account.

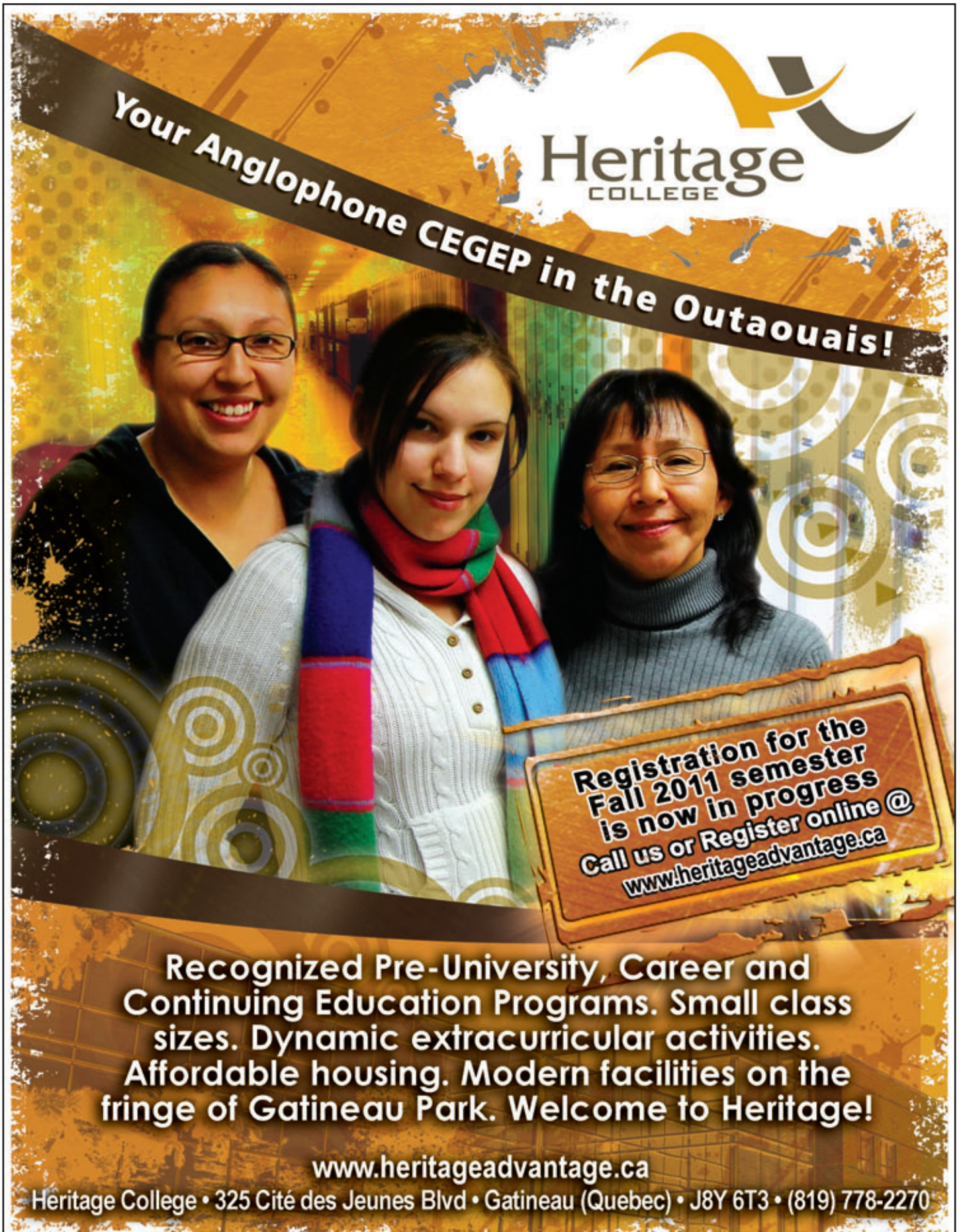
Aside from personal accounts, FNB clients also have access to products and services that include loans, credit, investment planning, mortgages and financial management.

In order to apply for a loan or a line of credit the FNB, like other financial institutions, will ask for standard information such as occupation, income and any loans you may already have. In addition, to this the bank will request consent to verify your credit history in order to help them process the application and make a decision regarding the application.

Should you hope to buy a home, the FNB, like most other banks, offers mortgages. Unlike other financial institutions however, the FNB provides important information about the purchase of your first home, before you even apply for a mortgage. By visiting its website, speaking to an advisor or filling out a pre-approval application, the FNB helps make this very important purchase less intimidating. One benefit of the FNB's pre-approval application is that it doesn't involve any obligation on behalf of the applicant, however, and if you choose to take out a mortgage during the 60-to-120-day pre-approval period, you might be entitled to a guaranteed interest rate.

As mentioned above, the FNB also offers investment services. Aside from those provided by most banks, such as RRSPs, GICs and mutual funds, the FNB offers term deposits, which are intended to maximize return on surplus funds, and which can be liquidated early in case of emergencies. There is a penalty charge for doing this but in an emergency it's a relief to know you have access to your money, even if it's tied up in an investment.

Personal banking is not the sole interest of the FNB. Like other financial institutions, the FNB offers services for businesses as well. Business accounts are the same as those offered to individuals, but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the protocol to open one is slightly different. In order to open a business account you will need to provide legal documentation that confirms the existence of the business, identification of the account holders and a description of the nature of the business.

A business account with the FNB will allow the cardholder access to services, such as web banking, collection services, payroll services, loans, credit, mortgages, and overdraft protection. Unique to FNB business account holders is access to the on-reserve mortgage, which allows a business to purchase, construct or renovate single-family homes or multiple-residential properties in order to help create solutions for on-reserve housing.

As you can see, the FNB not only offers many of the services provided by other financial institutions, but it also operates with the intention of creating Aboriginal autonomy. It has products and services that are not offered by other banks and that are designed with the needs of First Nations people in mind.

For more info, visit www.firstnationsbank.com or contact the branch closest to you.

Chisasibi FNB 819-855-3458

Nemaska FNB 819-673-2733

CIBC

Being a larger financial institution, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce offers the same basic services as other banks. What is unique to CIBC is that it has created an Aboriginal Banking Team, which is designed to understand of the unique needs of First Nations individuals.

According to its website, the team offers advising, support and products that are intended to reflect the specific financial requirements of First Nations clients. Access to these types of services mean that you can get help with budgeting, investing, obtaining credit, starting a business or even planning for a child's post-secondary education.

CIBC offers a variety of accounts not unlike those provided by other banks, the only small difference being that it also has student accounts available.

The benefits to holding an account with CIBC, especially for those living in remote communities, include access to "Accessible Banking Services", a service allowing clients to manage their accounts online, by telephone or at a bank machine, no matter where they are.

Aside from basic banking services and products, like loans, credit, mortgages and RRSPs, CIBC also provides RESPs (educational), RDSPs (disability) and mutual funds.

Finally, CIBC provides insurance, a service that not all financial institutions offer. As a CIBC account holder you can acquire creditor insurance, health and life insurance, or travel, home and auto insurance.

CIBC has a lot to offer its clients, which may make it a good option with respect to personal banking. To determine if CIBC is right for you or to make further inquires about its services, consult its website at www.cibc.com, contact the Aboriginal Banking Team, or visit the branch nearest to you.

Aboriginal Banking Team, Central Eastern Region

Manager: Tom Morrisson

Telephone: 416-980-2183

Fax: 905-571-3797

Chisasibi CIBC 819-855-2803

Caisse Populaire Desjardins

The Caisse Populaire Desjardins is not a bank, but a financial cooperative that offers a wide range of banking services to all its members, including those in remote areas.

The fact that it's a cooperative means that the institution is owned and run by its members and elected officials. This means that instead of working for a small group of investors, the bank actually works for you and your financial well-being.

This being the case, it should not be difficult to understand why the Caisse, aside from typical banking services, aspires to contribute to the economic and social development of the communities in which they are located.

With this in mind, the Caisse has created products and services which are designed to protect the interests of its members, while helping them achieve their financial goals.

Unlike other large banks, when you open an account with the Caisse, you become a member of a credit-and-savings co-op. There are several ways to apply for membership with the Caisse, the easiest being on-line. If you do not have access to the Internet, you can call for an appointment with an advisor at the Mistissini branch. Should you decide to open an account you will have to fill out an identification verification form, provide two pieces of ID, the first being a passport and the second being any of the following: social insurance number, driver's license, health insurance card, a birth certificate or a certificate of Indian status.

Beyond this, applicants are asked to pay a $5 fee for their "qualifying share", in other words, the cost of their share of the co-op.

Like other banks, the Caisse offers a variety of accounts to choose from, but unlike most, these are designed to help your money grow. Some of these include the Build-up Saving s Account, the High-Yield Account and Desjardin Youth Profit Account. Other than basic banking, the Caisse provides investment, mortgage, loan, insurance, credit and personal assessment services.

For a full list of account options as well as detailed information about the accounts please refer to the Caisse's website, www.desjardins.com, or visit the branch closest to you.

Although it may seem that the Caisse is limited to personal banking, it provides services for businesses as well. Whether you are self-employed, or have a small or large enterprise, the Caisse offers a variety of options and solutions to help your business grow. It provides services that are designed to help you take your company international, teach you how to manage business finances, and protect your company and employees. It can even show you options for adopting sustainable business practices. The Caisse can also provide access to loans and financing, payroll and human-resource services and group-retirement options.

As with all banks, there are a lot of choices to choose from with respect to accounts, products and services. To

avoid feeling intimidated, a preliminary search online followed by a meeting with an advisor might be the best way to help you make decisions regarding your particular financial situation.

Mistissini Caisse Populaire Desjardins 418-923-3289

Waswanipi Caisse Populaire Desjardins 819-753-2576

The Bank of Montreal

The Bank of Montreal has 11 full-service branches in Aboriginal communities across Canada, and has an "Aboriginal Banking Unit" that was created almost a decade ago, in order to build sustainable relationships with Aboriginal communities, businesses and individuals. BMO understands that the Aboriginal marketplace is evolving and as such is devoted to contributing to the self-sufficiency of Aboriginal people businesses and communities through access to products and services that are designed with the specific needs of First Nations people in mind.

In building its financial relationship with Aboriginal communities, BMO not only provides on-reserve housing loan programs (without government guarantees), but also provides improved access to financing opportunities as well as respects appropriate Aboriginal protocols and practices in order to gain the trust of said communities.

Like other banks, BMO offers basic banking services, savings and chequing accounts, mortgages, investment planning, RRSPs and financial advisors. They also offer business-banking services that are not unlike those offered by the banks mentioned above.

A BMO account, business or personal, can be opened by presenting the required ID and answering some simple questions about your employment and place of residence.

At first glance, BMO seems a lot like any of the other banks mentioned above, but what makes it unique is that it offers scholarships and bursaries for Aboriginal youth. In keeping true to its dedication to the growth and self-sufficiency of Aboriginal communities and individuals, BMO has created an Aboriginal scholarship program and a bursary program.

The Ron Jamieson Financial Group Aboriginal Scholarship Program is a new program for Aboriginal youth who aspire to work in finance. It offers funding and experience through a paid summer internship. Successful interns may even get the chance to earn a fulltime role as a financial services manager upon completion of the program.

BMO also offers bursaries for Aboriginal youth to encourage them to stay in school and pursue higher education. These bursaries are awarded to students in Grade 9+ who are between 13 and 18 and can be up to $750.

For more info on these programs you can visit the Foundation for the Advancement of Aboriginal Youth (FAAY) at www.ccab.com/faay.

Wemindji BMO 819-978-3588

Waskaganish BMO 819-895-2177

www4.bmo.com/vgn/aboriginal/en

"BANKING CAN BE DONE ON-LINE OR OVER THE PHONE WHICH MAKES THE NEED TO GO IN PERSON TO A BRANCH LESS CRITICAL."

Financial pointers

Banks are the obvious place to take care of personal finances, however, not all communities have access to them. So what do you do when you need to borrow money for a big-ticket item, or stock up on groceries and other household items?

According to Sonny Orr, a financial advisor from Whapmagoostui, there are few options. Worse yet, the options for borrowing tend to come with a high interest rate.

In Whapmagoostui, not unlike other remote communities that do not have banks, the only way to get credit is directly through a local business, such as the Northern Store or Canada Post. The Northern Store in Whapmagoostui offers credit in the form of pre-paid Master cards, or through the "link card system". The link card offers money transfer services and banking over the phone, but at an additional cost. A cardholder can use telephone services at a cost of $2.50 per call, which can add up very quickly. Aside from these service charges, interest rates on these types of credit can reach as high as 29%. A better option may be to retain a pre-paid Visa through Canada Post. In this case, the pre-paid card can be used the same way as a debit card, and the cardholder is subject only to user fees, and no interest.

According to Orr, a better option would be to get credit through a cooperative. The benefits here are that you do not have to pay as much for services and the interest rates are significantly lower, at 5% or 6%. Cooperatives also reward clients in good standing and in some cases may offer them a line of credit of up to $2000.

If banking on a personal level is more difficult and costly in areas without banks, then banking as a business owner from a remote area must be equally difficult if not more so. There are options of course, but Orr warns people to be careful. There are several southern dealers willing to lend money to businesses, but with high interest. If you want to borrow money, for personal or business purposes, Orr recommends a different solution. Instead of borrowing from high-interest lenders, you might opt to borrow against your own life insurance or mortgage instead. The best option, according to Orr, is to open a good savings account with good return and avoid borrowing all together.

The fact that a community may not have a local bank should not stop you from opening an account, especially a savings account. Banking can be done on-line or over the phone which makes the need to go in person to a branch less critical. This brings us back to the question of which bank to choose. As with any important decision regarding purchases and finances, it is important to shop around. Not all banks are right for everyone, take the time to review their products and services before opening an account to make sure that you make the most of your money.

Whapmagoostui Sonny Orr, financial advisor – 819-929-0011; office 819-929-3364

Golden opportunity

The Crees and Goldcorp enter into an agreement for mining development

By Amy German

The Cree community of Wemindji may just be in for an economic boom in the coming years as in signing a deal for mining development with Goldcorp Inc on Category 3 lands just outside of the community.

The signing ceremony took place in Wemindji on February 21 between Goldcorp, Wemindji Chief Rodney Mark and members of the Grand Council of the Crees.

"This Collaboration Agreement is a vibrant example where, with the participation of the Crees, mining development can take place and prosper in Eeyou Istchee.

"This agreement marks the beginning of a collaborative and fruitful relationship between the Crees and Goldcorp, a relationship based on respect for Cree rights and environmental and economic sustainability. In accordance with the principles of our Cree Nation Mining Policy, the Crees and Goldcorp have ensured that our traditional rapport to the land remains intact. This agreement sets the new standard for mining proponents seeking to do business in Eeyou Istchee," said Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come at the ceremony.

According to Mark, this project, which is still only in an exploratory phase, is going ahead with the blessing of the people of Wemindji after four-and-a-half years of negotiations. In that time, Mark said Goldcorp managed to address the community's concerns when it came to environmental health and safety, with the company even going as far as holding workshops for the community so that everyone could understand the project.

Still, in signing the February 21 agreement, the project is yet to be set in stone as a great deal needs to happen before any variety of production can get underway.

"They are looking to do shaft mining here; I think that we would have a different perspective if it was open pit. Right now the project is in the advanced exploration stages but there still needs to be a Section 28 Environmental Review. We have signed an agreement for now but this does not mean that we have okayed it. What this means is that we have signed an agreement but the environmental process still needs to take place," said Mark.

Mark said initially the community's main concern had been about the potential tailings ponds that could come about as a byproduct of the project. At this point in time however, using tailings ponds to retain the waste generated has been taken out of the project and other mechanisms are to be incorporated. From Mark's understanding of the development project, the current plans leave no room for environmental contamination, particularly where it comes to water and wildlife in the vicinity.

Mark said he has the blessing of the local tallymen to go ahead with the project.

"The most important issue has been the potential for jobs as there are real employment opportunities here. During the construction phase alone we are looking at 800 jobs and so this is going to be a huge opportunity not just for Wemindji but also for the Cree nation as a whole. During the production phase we are looking at another 600 jobs but right now these numbers are just estimates," said Mark.

Wemindji Chief Rodney Mark

"WHAT THIS MEANS IS THAT WE HAVE SIGNED AN AGREEMENT BUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS STILL NEEDS TO TAKE PLACE"

Between now and the coming years when the project is finally off the ground and will require manpower to operate the mine, Mark said that within his community there will be a large focus on getting Crees the training necessary to obtain the coveted, high-paying jobs that will be available.

According to George R. Burns, Senior Vice President of Canada and U.S. Operations at Goldcorp, the deal is being touted as a win-win situation for everyone involved.

"This is really an extremely important project for Goldcorp. It is going to be a significant part of our production and asset profile and in terms of entering into a relationship with the Cree, I can tell you that it is one of the things that I am most proud of in my career.

"It is a relationship where we are jointly aligned on the success of the project and respecting all of the major factors that go into a major mine, the environment, people, and the communities in and around where the mine is going to be conducted and in this case, in Cree territory, on a Cree trapline. I have been involved in negotiations directly for the last two years and developed a solid relationship with everybody that was part of the negotiating process," said Burns.

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Proposing partnership

The SDBJ in talks with Eastmain about revitalizing Km 381

By Amy German

The Société de développement de la Baie-James (SDBJ) recently announced that it has been in talks with the Cree community of Eastmain to revitalize the rest stop at Km 381 on the James Bay highway and has signed a Memorandum of Understanding for possible development.

According to Eastmain Chief Rusty Cheezo, the SDBJ approached the community last year to see if there was any interest in developing a partnership to renovate the existing rest-stop facilities with some expansion.

The SDBJ is currently proposing a $4.5 million project that would involve the construction of a new building to provide food, new accommodations, fuel sales and tourism services for visitors to the area. Km 381 is currently the only service area along the 600 km of the James Bay highway.

SDBJ President and Chief Executive Officer Raymond Thibault released a statement in early February stating that both sides would be giving themselves six months define what the renovations could involve.

"We are very pleased that the Cree Nation of Eastmain is interested in considering such a business partnership with us. Now the challenge is to reconcile our respective visions to make this a real anchor project for developing tourism in the James Bay territory," said Thibault.

According to Cheezo, the community has been shopping the idea of a partnership around the other Cree communities to see if there is any interest in the project.

Though the SDBJ has proposed a renovation of Km 381, Cheezo said the community is also looking at the idea of creating a new facility at Km 372 instead.

The community believes that Km 372 may offer better opportunities for tourism because its location by a lake could possibly accommodate floatplanes. Because it is a more aesthetic setting, this too could boost tourism amongst the existing Cree-run camps in the area as potential guests may be more inclined to stay longer. The question is whether the Crees will be able to convince the SDBJ.

"We have tourists, like the caribou hunters and fishermen, who come by. We could develop other tourism ideas for people just coming to Eastmain like going out to the bay or sightseeing. There are different things throughout the year. We have to find new ways to create employment and tourism is one of the ways," said Cheezo.

Cheezo said the current facilities at Km 381 consist of a gas station and some trailer-type lodging that he described as "not too inviting". The biggest problem however is the fact that the current facility runs solely on generators as it is not hooked up to the hydro grid. This adds a second problem as the running and maintenance of the generators has proven quite costly over the years.

Eastmain Chief Rusty Cheezo

The community is looking to see if the SDBJ would be inclined to delay the project by one year as it would increase the likelihood of connecting whatever proposed area to the grid.

"We were trying to convince them to go to the lake, start at a new location and not worry about rebuilding at 381. With a new location we could even give it a Cree name, not just having it as 372. We would ask the tallymen if they have a name for the lake," said Cheezo.

Cheezo said he and his people are currently working on a presentation that they will make before the SDBJ in regards to the possibility of building the project on the lake at Km 372. While Cheezo will be meeting with the SDBJ in the coming weeks, reaching a compromise between both parties on the project might still be months away.

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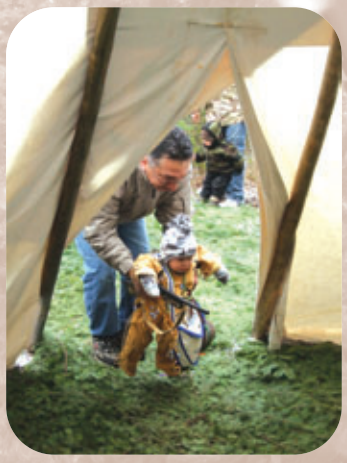
A CREE WALKINGOUT CEREMONY

By Sarah Mianscum

On Sunday, May 9, 2010, Maverick Nimischuu Coonishish, aged 9 months, prepares for his first walking out ceremony. Just a few days before, parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles were all working hard to prepare the site of the ceremony, a tepee was set-up adjacent to a young spruce tree. Maverick would walk out of the teepee and go around the young spruce tree, and some fresh game would be waiting for him.

The moment came. Friends and family began to gather around the ceremony site with cameras. Maverick was inside the tepee and then he came out for his first walking out. He was so conscious of the crowd that he paused several times in his walk to pose for cameras.

He finally got near the young spruce tree and with his father (Katejun Coonishish) and grandfather (Sydney Coonishish), he fired his first gunshot (with a 22 cal.) and claimed the fresh goose laying near the tree and began to haul it back to the entrance of the tepee.



Maverick walked inside for the first time and delivered his game to his mother (Adrienne Shecapio), grandmothers (Kathy Shecapio and Sarah Mianscum) and great-grandmother (Winnie Mianscum), who were waiting for the young hunter to return into the tepee. Once inside, he gave his goose to his mother and everyone else followed inside the tepee and they all enjoyed a welcoming meal.

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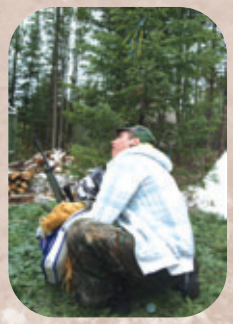

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CHRD FACILITY IN CHISASIBI

1. Object

The Cree Regional Authority (the "**CRA**") is requesting bids for the construction of a CHRD FACILITY, in the community of Chisasibi ("**Call for Tenders**"), the whole in compliance with the By-law Concerning the Procedures and Requirements relating to the Calling of Tenders and Awarding of Construction Contracts (the "**By-Law**") adopted by the CRA pursuant to section 85 of the *Act respecting the Cree Regional Authority*. Relevant extracts of the By-Law will be included in the Contract Documents (as defined in section 5 below).

2. Queries

For any queries concerning this Call for Tenders, Bidders (as defined in section 3 below) are invited to contact Mr. Norman Gull, Director of Capital Works and Services of the CRA at fax No. (514) 861-0760.

3. Bidders

The CRA is requesting bids solely from Cree Contractors (as defined in section 12 below) holding all required licences and authorizations to carry out construction activities in Quebec and possessing the capacity to successfully perform the terms and conditions of the contract (the "**Bidders**"). In all cases, the overall contract price, financial stability, experience in performing similar contracts, capabilities and abilities of the concerned Bidder must meet with the approval of the Director of Capital Works.

4. Sub-Contractors and Suppliers

The Bidders are responsible for the selection of sub-contractors and suppliers, in terms of their solvency and of their bid content. Each Bidder shall indicate in its bid, the names and addresses of proposed sub-contractors and suppliers and a brief description of the work entrusted to them or the materials ordered from them. The Bidders must inform the sub-contractors and suppliers of the conditions of the contract and ensure that they hold the required permits and licenses and meet all other requirements under the contract.

5. Contract Documents

The plans, specifications, contract documents (including the form of contract which shall be based on Canadian Construction Documents Committee (CCDC) documentation) and other information related to this Call for Tenders (the "**Contract Documents**" – on CD) may be obtained as of March 11, 2011, with a non-refundable deposit of $25.00 (certified check to the order of (Monette, Leclerc, St-Denis et Associés, Architectes) for each copy, from:

Monette, Leclerc, St-Denis et Associés, Architectes
1200 8e Rue, Val-d'Or
J9P 3N7
Tel : 819-824-3651
Fax : 819-824-2804
Email: mls@mlsarchitectes.com

6. Submission of Bids

The bids shall be delivered in sealed envelopes (one original and two copies) addressed to the CRA no later than Wednesday, April 6, 2011 at 2:00 PM (Montreal time) ("**Closing Date**") at:

Cree Regional Authority
277 Duke Street
Montreal (Quebec), H3C 2M2
Attention of: Mr. Norman Gull, Director – Capital Works and Services

Each bid must be include a certified cheque in an amount equivalent to 10% of the value of the bid, made payable to the CRA, or by a bid bond in the same amount and valid for a period of sixty (60) days from the Closing Date. This bid bond shall be exchanged at the signing of the contract for performance bonds for wages, materials and services, each one corresponding to 50% of the amount of the contract.

7. Validity of Bids

Each bid must remain valid and irrevocable for a period of sixty (60) days from the Closing Date.

8. Commitment

Neither this Call for Tenders nor the Bidders quotations shall constitute a contract with the CRA. A contract may only be executed upon the written acceptance of the bid of a successful Bidder and award of the contract by the Executive Committee of the CRA upon the recommendation of the Director of Capital Works in accordance with the terms of the Contract Documents.

9. Confidential Information

The Contract Documents provided to the Bidder by the CRA are confidential, shall remain the sole property of the CRA and may not be used outside the context of this Call for Tenders without the CRA's prior written consent.

10. Limitation of Liability

The CRA shall not be responsible or held liable for damages, including without limiting the generality of the foregoing, liability for costs of preparing the bid, loss of profit or loss of property, and each Bidder hereby releases, indemnifies and agrees to hold the CRA harmless from any liability arising from the Bidder's submission of a bid in accordance with this Call for Tenders.

11. Discretion

The CRA is not obligated to accept the lowest bid or any other bid received.

12. Definitions

In this Call for Tenders:

12.1 "**Cree Band**" means the Cree Nation of Chisasibi, the Whapmagoostui First Nation, the Cree Nation of Wemindji, the Cree Nation of Eastmain, The Crees of the Waskaganish First Nation, the Cree Nation of Nemaska, the Waswanipi Band, and the Cree Nation of Mistissini, respectively constituted as corporations by the *Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act*, S.C. 1984, c. 18, as well as the Crees of Oujé-Bougoumou (also known as the "Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation") represented by the Oujé-Bougoumou Eenuch Association until such time as the Oujé-Bougoumou Band is constituted as a corporation under the *Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act*, S.C. 1984, c. 18, and thereafter the Oujé-Bougoumou Band.

12.2 "**Cree Beneficiary**" means a Cree beneficiary under the meaning of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement whose name appears on the beneficiary list maintained by Quebec.

12.3 "**Cree Contractor**" means an entity authorized to carry on construction activities in Quebec, which is accredited by the Director of Capital Works as a *bona fide* Cree contractor and which answers the following minimum criteria:

a) a corporation i) with more than fifty percent (50%) of the corporation's voting shares beneficially owned by one (1) or more Cree Beneficiary, Cree Band or Cree Entity and ii) the board of directors of which is comprised by more than fifty percent (50%) of Cree Beneficiaries and iii) which has itself carried out construction projects for a period of at least one (1) year;

b) a non-profit corporation i) with more than fifty percent (50%) of the members being Cree Beneficiaries, Cree Bands or Cree Entities and ii) the governing body of which is comprised by more than fifty per cent (50%) of Cree Beneficiaries and iii) which has itself carried out construction projects for a period of at least one (1) year;

c) a sole proprietorship operated by a Cree Beneficiary which has on its own carried out construction projects for a period of at least one (1) year;

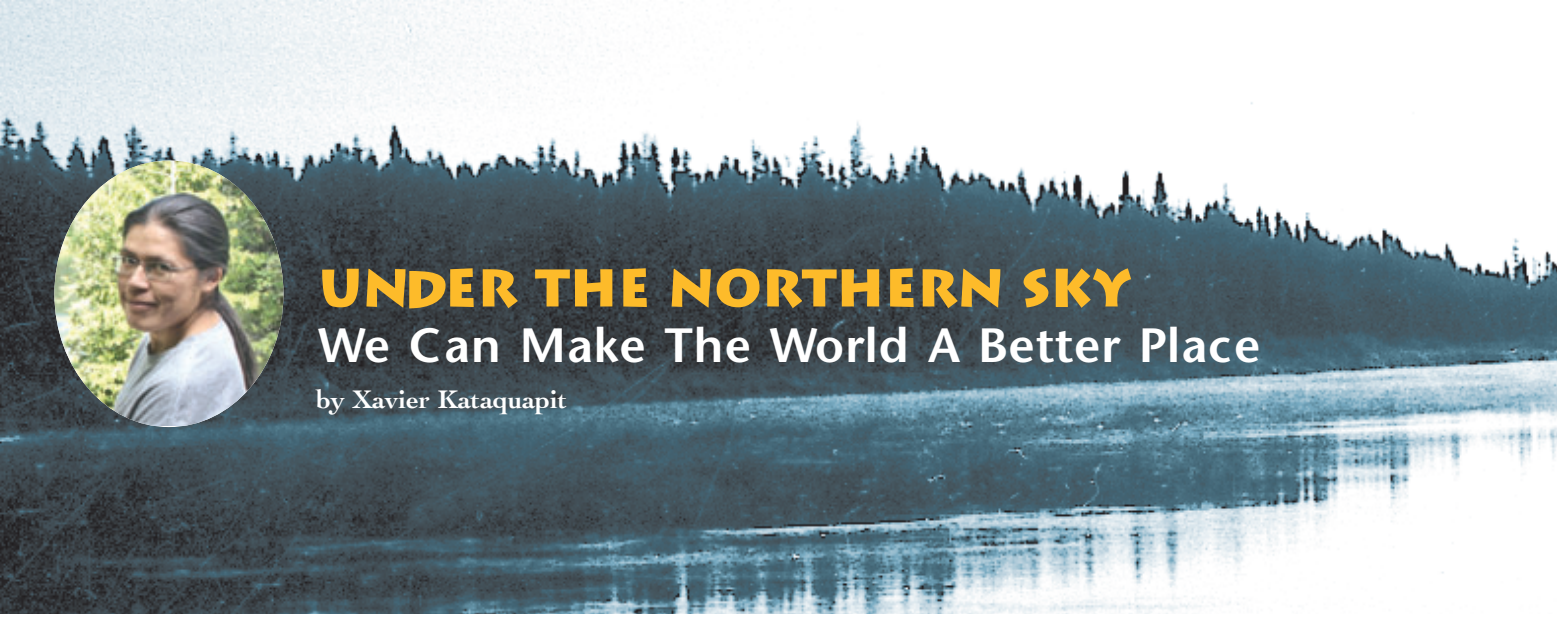
d) a Joint Venture, partnership or other similar arrangement between a Cree Contractor as defined in paragraphs a) to c) above and a third party may qualify as a "Cree Contractor" under the terms of this By-law if it is accredited by the Director of Capital Works as meeting the following criteria:

i) the Cree Contractor as defined in paragraphs a) to c) above is entitled to receive at least fifty percent (50%) of the profits of the joint venture, partnership or similar arrangement;

ii) the Cree Contractor as defined in paragraphs a) to c) above invests at least twenty-five percent (25%) %) of the capital and equipment required by the Joint Venture, partnership or similar arrangement, including working capital;

iii) Cree Beneficiaries will carry out at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the overall man-hours of the labour required under the contract and a binding undertaking to this effect satisfactory to the Director of Capital Works is entered into by the third party and the Cree Contractor as defined in paragraphs a) to c) above.

12.4 "**Cree Entity**" means the Grand Council of the Cree (Eeyou Istchee), the CRA (including when acting through the Board of Compensation thereto), the James Bay Eeyou Corporation, the Opimiscow Companee, the Sakami Eeyou Corporation, the Cree Trappers' Association, the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association, the Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association, the Cree Development Corporation, the Cree villages, a Cree landholding corporation, as well as any other Cree-controlled corporation, enterprise or legal entity referred to in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement or created pursuant to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.



UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

We Can Make The World A Better Place

by Xavier Kataquapit

I have so much to thank my parents for. One important thing has come to my mind lately. I owe them much gratitude for being good and decent people who never put the poison of hate into my thinking. It never really occurred to me in the past that I was so fortunate to have been raised to accept others and to be open-minded.

First Nation people in general are very tolerant and I am not sure but I think it has something to do with having to depend on everybody around you for survival in remote areas. We never learned to dislike people for stupid reasons and I recall many times noticing that community members I grew up with found ways to accept others who were different in some way. Humour always played a part in relationships up the James Bay coast. Even if you did not like someone you could always find something in common around a good laugh.

Happily, I never understood why someone could be racist, bigoted, homophobic or just not like someone for the way they were born. It never made sense to me. When I first left my remote First Nation of Attawapiskat and went to school in North Bay and Timmins I discovered that racism and bigotry was alive and well. Many times I was the brunt of racist jokes and I felt small next to non-Natives in school. For this reason we Native kids from up the coast hung out together. We felt more comfortable and safer in our own little groups.

At this point in my life I have travelled much of the world and experienced many cultures and ways of life. I learned so much from meeting people from all colours, tastes and walks of life. It occurs to me that much of that happened because I was open to others.

Sometimes I find life in small northern towns challenging in that people still hold on to those old hatreds. Much of the time when I run into people who have racist attitudes I understand that they are ignorant in terms of knowledge and also they are fearful. Their fear, I think, comes out of not knowing or understanding how another culture thinks and lives.

As a writer I have learned over the years that one of my jobs is to question. I learned that from many writers and artists I can call friends. Recently, I notice in the media reports from the U.S. about instances of hate and racism rearing its ugly head. Much of this is being driven by a very well-financed right-wing movement. This has created an environment where I hear people saying hateful, racist, bigoted and homophobic things on national television, radio and in newspapers. It seems weird to me that after all the years of dealing with this kind of crap it looks like it is all starting over again.

I have some good friends who have had experience with political systems and they tell me that much of this new wave of hate and violence is being pushed by some wealthy and influential people, who have a political agenda. I have learned that when politicians start trying to scare or intimidate people, this causes fear. It has often been said that fear is a great motivator and in politics it can get people elected.

It seems that in the U.S. and here in Canada a lot of money and effort is being put into discrediting good ways of thinking, organizations and people. Somehow we have allowed far-right politic views to convince many of us that liberals, socialists, environmentalists, conservationists and humanists are the bad guys. In conversations over the past year I have been called a communist for suggesting that the wealth of the land is not spread more equally. Hey, I come from a remote First Nation and I can tell you that most Native reserves in this country are very much Third World realities. It never has and it never will make sense to me that a few people in a country should have almost all the wealth while a large percentage of the population has very little.

We are so fortunate that we live in Canada where life is not as hard as it is in many other places in the world. However, we also should be aware that things seem to be changing around us and much of what we take for granted like a peaceful world without war, the opportunity for employment and a people-based healthcare program could change.

When politicians start trying to scare or intimidate us we should remember all the lessons in history where this happened before and stand up to that kind of bullying. Don't let anybody tell us that sharing is a bad idea, caring for the land is an outdated concept, war can be justified and minorities or people who are different can be oppressed.

CLASSIFIEDS

BIRTHDAYS

I would like to wish a happy belated 1st birthday to my baby boy Johnny-Joe. Mommy loves you so much and many more birthdays to come. His birthday date was on Feb. 15th, 2011. Love, mommy Patricia Snowboy (Whap)

Wishing warm birthday greetings to my mother Lizzie A. Gordon on March 9th, 2011. Whoa! 78 young years and many more my dear mother. We love you so much! From your paanik Louisa Gordon & your Larry and Denis

I would like to wish my son Noah-Remaya a very happy belated birthday; he turned 9 years old on Jan 23rd, 2011 and many more birthdays to come. I love you my son! From Mom Patricia Snowboy (Whap)

Happy 4th birthday to Naamon-Frank Dick and many more birthdays to come, hope you have fun on your birthday. I love you so much xoxoxo. His birthday is on Feb 23rd, 2011. From Patricia (Whap)

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Where to get help: bilingual, anonymous, confidential and free phone services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Missing Children's Network: They'll help you find kids who have run away or disappeared. 514-843-4333.

Kid's Help Phone Line: 1-800-668-6868 (www.kidshelpphone.ca)

Youth helpline: 1-800-263-2266 (www.teljeunes.com)

Parent helpline: 1-800-361-5085 (www.parenthelpline.ca)

Drugs: help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.drogueaidereference.qc.ca)

Gambling: help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

S.O.S. Conjugal Violence: 1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolenececonjugale.com)

Health and Sexuality resources center: 1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm) (www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline: 1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal: 1-866-403-4688. (www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec: 1-866-277-3553

Residential School Survivors: A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources.html

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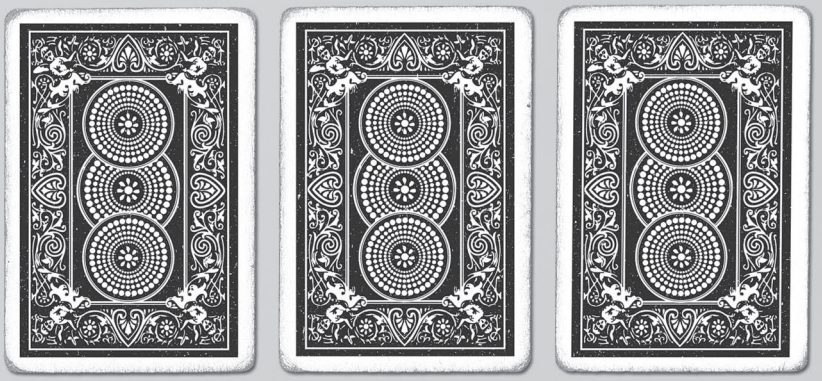

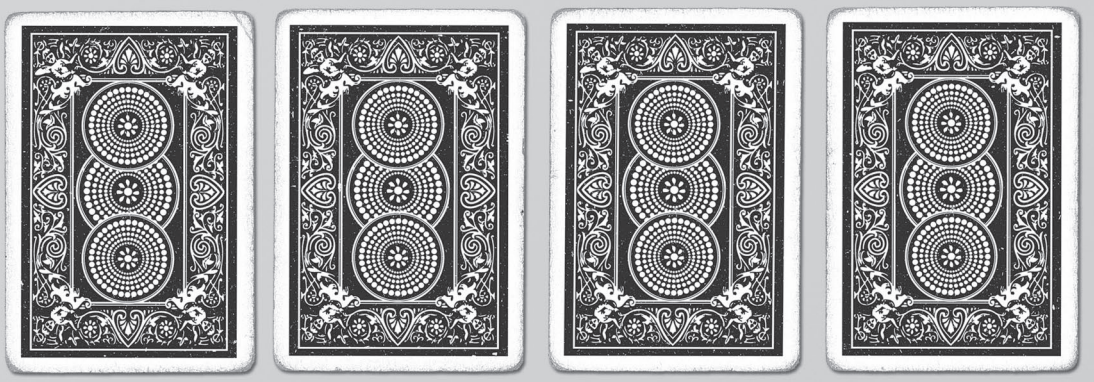

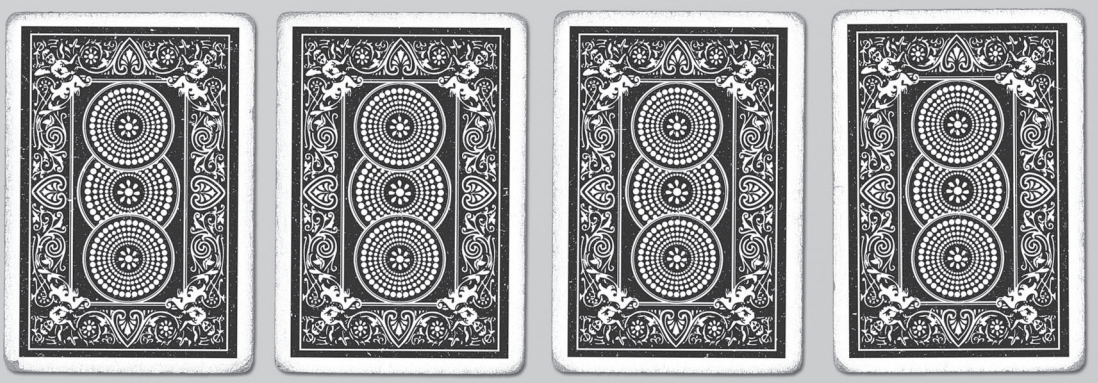

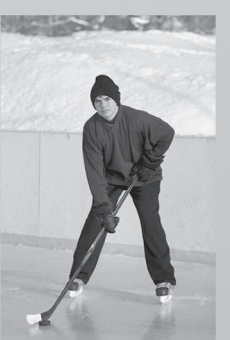

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Cree School Board Tours

2011

"Communicating • Consulting • Connecting"
with our Communities

Dates of Cree School Board Tours:

- Whapmagoostui – March 9 and 10, 2011*
- Chisasibi – March 21 and 22, 2011*
- Wemindji – February 7 and 8, 2011
- Eastmain – February 9 and 10, 2011
- Mistissini – February 21 and 22, 2011
- Waskaganish – March 7 and 8, 2011
- Nemaska – March 23 and 24, 2011
- Waswanipi – March 28 and 29, 2011
- Ouje-Bougoumou – March 30 and 31, 2011
- Washaw Sibi - Dates T.B.D

***NEW DATES**

Agenda Items for Cree School Board Tours

- Council Policy Manual;
- Executive Summary of *Communication, Accountability and Follow-up for School Improvement* (CAFSI) Report and Recommendations;
- CSB Strategic Action Plan (2011-2015);
- The Plan for School Improvement;
- Language Instruction Programs.